

United Nations

Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* President of Rwanda urges United Nations to quickly establish international tribunal to try those responsible for genocide in his country; Guyana, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Antigua and Barbuda, Kazakhstan and Mali also speak in General Assembly's general debate.

* Central African Republic says military regimes submerged Africa's nations in poverty; Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ghana, Cameroon, Yemen, Sierra Leone and Fiji among other speakers in general debate yesterday.

* Member States owe United Nations \$2.3 billion as of 30 September; \$812 million owed to regular budget and \$1.5 billion to peace-keeping.

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President Pasteur Bizimungu of Rwanda today urged the United Nations to quickly establish an international tribunal in his country to bring those responsible for genocide to justice. He supported the adoption of a Security Council resolution to facilitate the arrest and trial of suspects currently outside Rwanda's borders, based on Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. A genocide that rivalled the Nazi Holocaust had been committed before the very eyes of the international community. It was six months since the initial crimes had been carried out and it was time to act. Delaying the start of trials caused frustration on the part of the victims, who were beginning to despair at the lack of justice.

It was necessary to rebuild Rwanda entirely, so as to ensure that the various elements of the population could coexist, he continued. That task would be enormous, but the will of the Rwandese people was unflinching. Addressing the victims of genocide, he reiterated his Government's determination to bring the culprits to justice. Those Rwandese who had been "blindly manipulated to join the bankrupt policies of division and suppression" should join in the task of building a new society based on tolerance and reconciliation. He stressed that the Government encouraged all refugees to return without discrimination, and appealed to the international community to support the repatriation effort.

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The Prime Minister of Guyana, Samuel Hinds, told the General Assembly today that meeting basic human needs was a prerequisite for a stable political environment. While Guyana suffered from the residue of external debt and the debilitating effects of structural adjustment, it was committed to providing health, housing and education services. It would also work to create an economic and social environment in which men and women could reach their full potential. However, problems of development, population growth and environmental destruction were global, and it was necessary to address their root causes. He expressed the hope that the current Assembly session would yield positive measures to address prevailing economic, social and humanitarian problems.

He urged that the international community seriously consider the "new global humanitarian order" proposed by the President of Guyana, which aimed to fuse various aspects of undertakings by the Assembly. That proposal was directly related to the Assembly's work on the Secretary-General's Agenda for Development, the proposals of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), and the Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. It also concerned the recent International Conference on Population and Development, and the forthcoming World Summit on Social Development and Fourth World Conference on Women.

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Mohammed Bin Mubarak Al-Khalifa, Bahrain's Foreign Minister, said the new global order should rest on three basic principles: creation of a new vision of development; a mechanism for the maintenance of international peace and security; and cultural interaction among nations. The Agenda for Development was an important attempt to recast the development process to meet the needs of developing countries. Those countries were still beset by indebtedness, low commodity prices, high interest rates, a decline in investments, and international trade barriers. The world needed an equitable order that enabled all States to reap the benefits of economic advances. The World Trade Organization should contribute to the establishment of an impartial economic order. Environmental concerns should not be used to raise protectionist taxes and reduce trade in certain commodities.

Turning to the situation in the Middle East, he said Israel should accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The region must be made free from nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. Bahrain welcomed the positive developments in the Middle East peace process, but progress must be comprehensive and integrated. It would be futile to focus on peace and development in one part of the region and leave problems unresolved in another. Negotiations should lead to a complete Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem, the Syrian Golan and southern Lebanon.

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Bangladesh's Foreign Minister, A.S.M. Mustafizur Rahman, said concerns about territorial security were being overshadowed by concerns about human security. Within States, resurgent nationalism and factionalism based on narrow self-interest, ethnic and cultural rivalries, bigotry and extremism had contributed to unprecedented human misery. Political instability had contributed to economic breakdown and economic backwardness had fired political upheaval in a never-ending vicious cycle. New global forces had emerged that no State could control on its own. A new polarity was emerging between rich and poor countries.

The development crisis called for urgent action, especially to implement the 1990s Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries, he continued. There was a need to accelerate growth, write off debts, provide wider and preferential access to developing markets, and boost foreign direct investment. International law was the only protection for smaller and weaker States. It must be strengthened, especially where the absence of law could lead to conflict over such issues as water-sharing, maritime jurisdictions, transboundary pollution and environmental damage. He highlighted the issue of constrained resources and the need for new ones. The heart of the matter was the need for commitment to the entire development cause rather than particular interests. It was necessary to balance long-term interests and immediate emergencies, while facing up to the underlying crisis of development.

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Lester Bird, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, said the developed world had taken very little action on behalf of the Caribbean countries. Their situation in international economic relations had worsened, as prices for commodities had decreased, the cost of imports had increased and access to preferential markets had diminished. Meanwhile, only a handful of donors had met United Nations targets for official development assistance (ODA). The underlying causes of worsening economic and human conditions, and of crises like those in Grenada 13 years ago and in Haiti today, had gone unnoticed and unattended.

Debt repayments prevented many countries in Latin America and the Caribbean from revitalizing their economies, he continued. That situation called for a change in the rules of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank to allow for the forgiveness of debt. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries should also relax their position on bilateral debt. At least 50 per cent of existing debt should be forgiven. If a meaningful dialogue between the rich and poor countries did not begin soon, there could be a standoff in relations that would paralyse economic cooperation and progress. Within the Economic and Social Council and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), such a dialogue should lead to the adoption of a practical programme acceptable to both rich and poor.

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Kanat Saudabayev, Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan, said his country wanted to establish itself as a link between Europe and Asia. He supported the convening of a conference on confidence-building measures in Asia. Its purpose would be to develop fundamental principles and areas of cooperation with a view to strengthening peace and stability and promoting economic prosperity. The process of economic integration should lead to the formation of an Asian common market. In addition, the President of Kazakhstan had proposed the establishment of the "Euro-Asian Union" to prevent conflicts in the post-Soviet period.

Since the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), stability and security as a basis of economic and social reform had come to the forefront, he continued. The first step in the "Euro-Asian Union" integration process was the creation of a common economic space by the central Asian States -- Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and the Kyrgyz Republic. Appropriate inter-State bodies, such as the Central Asian Bank, had already begun to function. The draft for the proposed union must adequately reflect the interests of the States of the region, regardless of their size, population, economic and other indicators. Efforts to bring about integration at the regional and inter-regional levels needed the support of international organizations and leading countries, he added.

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Mali's Foreign Minister, Sy Kadiatou Sow, said any conflict capable of destabilizing a region was a threat to international security. Regional and sub-regional initiatives for the settlement of conflicts should be supported by the international community and local States. Increased cooperation was needed between the United Nations and organizations such as the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to address the situation in Somalia. Regarding Western Sahara, the United Nations must pursue efforts to hold a referendum in line with relevant Security Council resolutions. Mali supported any initiatives in Bosnia and Herzegovina to reduce the stubborn position of the Serb population. Efforts must be made to ensure implementation of Council resolutions on the situation there.

One of the major challenges before the United Nations was development, she continued. The strategies undertaken to date had not produced the desired results, particularly in Africa. The new World Trade Organization should focus attention on the conditions of developing countries. Preferential treatment should be offered to the least developed ones. A new system to govern world trade should address such issues as technology transfers, regional economic integration and migration. She welcomed the recent adoption of the International Convention on Drought and Desertification.

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The President of the Central African Republic, Ange-Félix Patasse, told the General Assembly yesterday that Africa's military regimes had submerged

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their populations in a state of unprecedented impoverishment. Towards the end of 1990, the cries of alarm from those people were heard by the international community, which soon helped them attain democracy. It had started in the East and was soon felt in Africa. Some countries had chosen national conferences, while others -- including the Central African Republic -- had chosen free democratic elections.

He expressed the hope that the United Nations would deal with the hotbeds of tension throughout the world, particularly in Africa. The forty-ninth session of the Assembly must take urgent measures to prevent and control conflicts by establishing and strengthening legal instruments. Only in that way would the poorer countries be able to control their fate. Africa had a wealth of raw materials, yet its economies had become very fragile. That was because of different ideologies, which reflected selfish interests and an overall lack of solidarity among African nations. The continent accounted for less than 2 per cent of international trade, and was crushed by debt. Structural adjustments had done nothing to improve the situation. International assistance and solidarity was necessary to raise the standard of living of the African people.

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Choi Su Hon, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, said yesterday that following the death of President Kim Il Sung, his country had turned grief and sorrow into strength and courage. The new leader, Kim Jong Il, enjoyed infinite respect and absolute trust. The People's Republic had made every effort to unify the Korean peninsula, and that would hopefully be achieved in the 1990s. A confederation based on the concept of one nation and one State, two systems and two governments, was the way to succeed. To defuse tensions and bring about peace, the Korean Armistice Agreement must be replaced with a peace agreement. The Agreement and its mechanism had failed to prevent a military build-up and large-scale war exercises.

Another important element in defusing tensions and establishing peace on the Korean peninsula was the resolution of the nuclear issue, he continued. That issue must be resolved bilaterally by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States. The two rounds of talks already conducted showed that if those countries worked together with trust, the outcome would be good. To demonstrate the transparency of its nuclear activities, the People's Republic had decided to replace graphite-moderated reactors with light water reactors. No threat or blackmail or sanctions would work against his country. The people would never beg for peace at the expense of their national dignity and the country would never sell its interests under pressure.

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Ghana's Foreign Minister, Obed Asamoah, said the end of the cold war and the strains of nation-building had produced new threats to peace around the

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world. However, Liberia and Somalia were close to being written off the way Afghanistan had been. Increasingly, regional organizations and small States were being called upon to bear the burden of securing peace. In Liberia, Ghana and other Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) members were struggling to help maintain a nation. In Rwanda, Ghana and Canada had been left alone to deal with a tragedy without adequate support. Given the unwillingness of many States to get involved in conflicts far from their shores, the international community must support States such as Ghana and regional organisations such as ECOWAS and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in defending the ideals of the United Nations.

The conflict situations in the developing world and the economically backward areas of Europe had their roots in economic deprivation and poverty, he said. Those conditions were compounded by an inequitable system of international trade and its attendant problems, such as debt. Most lower-income countries -- which had debts totalling \$1.3 trillion -- were in sub-Saharan Africa. The region's debt servicing amounted to \$200 billion, or 10 per cent of the total income of the countries involved. The scale of the debt problem and its consequences demanded action by the international community.

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Ferdinand Leopold Oyono, Foreign Minister of Cameroon, said his country had always sought to resolve its border dispute with Nigeria by using preventive diplomacy. Preventive diplomacy could stem conflicts and should be encouraged and supported by the international community. The means for carrying out preventive diplomacy should be strengthened by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the United Nations. Ongoing conflicts in Africa demanded action against poverty and destitution. Tolerance, the respect for rights and the sharing of the fruits of economic growth should take place at the national level. State sovereignty and territorial integrity must be respected.

Peace was the foundation of development, as had been noted in the Secretary-General's Agenda for Development, he continued. That report deserved the attention of the international community. The African economy was based on commodities, and development must take into account the need for diversification. A fund should be established for diversification in Africa. Debt, drought and desertification also required action. With the completion of the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), steps must be taken to address the marginalization of the continent.

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Yemen's Foreign Minister, Mohamed Salem Basendwah, said that in spite of the former division of his country, its people had always considered themselves to be one Muslim, Arab, Yemeni people, and had never forgotten that they belonged to one nation. This year, Yemen had been exposed to bloody

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sedition as a result of a conspiracy by treacherous elements who rebelled against legitimate institutions. Having ended that conspiracy, Yemen now enjoyed stability and security. A general amnesty had been declared and national reconciliation achieved. None of those who had deceived and disinformed had been subjected to any harm or put on trial.

The success of democracy depended on economic growth, he went on to say. That required an end to an economic war which took many different forms, including closure of regional markets to Yemen's agricultural and industrial products. Yemen appealed to its neighbours to lift all barriers to free trade, as an important step towards the normalization of relations and regional cooperation. Yemen also appealed to the Security Council to lift the sanctions against Iraq, which were no longer justified. Maintaining those measures would lead to deepening enmity between States in the region. The Council should also review its resolutions relating to Libya and accept the reasonable solutions put forward by the Arab League. Those included trying the suspects in the bombing of a Pan Am airliner over Lockerbie before an international court, in accordance with the law of Scotland.

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Abass Chernor Bundu, Sierra Leone's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, said poverty and decreasing living standards were at the heart of his country's problems. The Government had embarked on wide-ranging socio-economic reforms and had secured short-term macroeconomic stability. However, it had not removed structural constraints on the economy or improved supply capacity. The external indebtedness of developing countries posed the biggest impediment to their development. The United Nations and the international community should adopt the report of the high-level meeting on the debt crisis convened by the Non-Aligned Movement in Jakarta last August, which had endorsed some general principles for debt reduction.

The international community should provide developing countries with concessional financial and technical support for infrastructure, he said. The Secretary General's Agenda for Development provided a historic opportunity to address the root causes of poverty and underdevelopment. There was no clear commitment on the part of the developed countries to provide resources for the implementation of Agenda 21, the programme of action adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). The developing world was committed to implementing Agenda 21, but that commitment must be complemented by adequate human, financial and technical resources.

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Ratu Manasa Seniloli, representative of Fiji, noted that his country had participated in this year's Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. The international community should provide increased technical assistance for the human resource development programmes

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of small island States. He also noted that Fiji had been implementing the Convention on the Law of the Sea through its Marine Spaces Act. The entry into force of the Convention would consolidate his country's claims to the archipelagic waters, the territorial sea and the exclusive economic zone. Fiji advocated universal participation in the Convention.

Fiji also supported the conclusion of an international convention dealing with the safety and security of United Nations and associated personnel, as Fijian soldiers had died in various peace-keeping operations, he said. At present, there were at least 1,000 Fijian peace-keepers deployed worldwide. Continued innovations in the Department of Peace-keeping Operations would be necessary if it were to play a meaningful and effective role in support of United Nations activities. He went on to welcome the temporary cessation of nuclear testing in the Pacific region by France. The United States, the United Kingdom and France should accede to the Protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga as a demonstration of their commitment to nuclear non-proliferation and a ban on testing in the South Pacific. Fiji objected strongly to the sea transit through the region of consignments of plutonium bound for Japan.

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As of 30 September, Member States owed the United Nations a total of \$2.3 billion, according to the latest update on the Organization's financial situation. Of that amount, \$812 million was for assessments for the regular budget and \$1.5 billion was for peace-keeping operations.

The United Nations received several payments for peace-keeping last month. The United States made two payments totaling almost \$577 million; Japan paid \$201 million; the Russian Federation paid \$20 million; and China paid \$14.5 million. As a result, the Organization was able to pay almost \$168 million to troop-contributing countries in September. It was expected to pay another \$188 million to troop contributors by 15 October.

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Correction:

In the Daily Highlights of Monday, 26 September 1994, the last paragraph on page 5 should have read:

"The Council adopted resolution 943 (1994) by 11 votes in favour to 2 against (Djibouti and Pakistan), with Nigeria and Rwanda abstaining. It said it would suspend several economic sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) for an initial 100 days if the border between that country and Bosnia and Herzegovina were closed. It would suspend restrictions on air travel for civilian passengers, with regard to aircraft not impounded at the date of the adoption of the resolution. Also suspended were restrictions on maritime traffic, sporting events and cultural exchanges."

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